

our defence nor isolate itself from events key to our frontier. Our security requires a stable and peaceful international order.

Mr. Speaker and colleagues, our best defence in Canada continues to be collective defence.

As a recently uniformed member of the Canadian Armed Forces, I had the distinct privilege to serve NATO at work for over 30 years. I participated in major exercises involving over 1,600 ships and aircraft and hundreds and thousands of men and women from NATO nations, working proudly, diligently and effectively to preserve the integrity of the alliance and to preserve the peace. On this special occasion, Mr. Speaker, I beg the indulgence of the House to pay tribute to those men and women who have achieved this and in particular the men and women of Canada in uniform and civilians who make it work and who continue to "meet the test".

The preservation of peace over the last 30 years continues. Negotiations over arms control augur well for the future. We now have the opportunity to help put an end to the cold war and to continue to reduce that iron curtain which separates peoples and cultures. The time is now upon us. Let it now be said that the members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization did not step aside. Let it now be said that we in Canada seized the opportunity to the advantage at this hour, and let it be said that Canada did its part. I can put it in no better words than a man who stood in this House, the Right Hon. Pierre Elliott Trudeau, who said: "Did its part to help lift the shadow of war."

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by joining with my colleague in the Liberal Party in paying tribute to the men and women who over the years have done their duty as they saw it and are doing their duty as they see it today in Canada's contribution to NATO. It is important that we recognize Canadians who have been involved in that way for the work they have done. However, I also think that the fortieth anniversary of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization is an opportunity for us here in the House of Commons and in the country to reflect on what the Minister has rightly described as a cornerstone of successive Canadian governments foreign policy, an opportunity for us to reflect on NATO's past, on its present and its future. I will try to do this in the brief time allotted me to respond to the Minister's statement.

Statements by Ministers

The Minister began his statement with talk about shared values and ended his statement with a remark about those who have been critical of Canada's NATO role. I am sorry that he used the rhetoric of side-stepping responsibilities, because surely the debate within Canada has been about what is Canada's responsibility. It is not a question of someone wanting to sidestep responsibility and others wanting to live up to it, but of what indeed is the true responsibility of Canada in its foreign policy. Nevertheless, I ask the Minister to reflect on the extent to which the debate about NATO in this country, precipitated in large part by the NDP, has occurred precisely because some of the values that Alliance members have been asked to share over the years have been arguably ambiguous, in other cases hypocritical, and in some cases morally questionable.

• (1120)

In other cases they have been morally questionable.

The willingness of NATO, for instance, through its doctrine of flexible response, to be the first to use nuclear weapons, to be willing to destroy the world for the sake of democracy while tolerating at times military dictatorships within its own ranks, certainly does not and has not advanced its moral credibility with a great many Canadians. Its failure to live up to the so-called Canada clause which the Minister quoted and which he wrongly assesses NATO as having lived up to, that clause by which NATO was to be more than just a military alliance, has also bothered a great many Canadians.

For many more, the expectation on the part of our American partners in that alliance that to be allied in Europe was to be allied everywhere, wherever and however Americans chose to defend or advance their interests, regardless of the circumstances, was and continues to be a problem. In this respect, I find a strange omission in the Minister's statement. A more insightful rendering of the alliance's history and those things which have tested it would have included Viet Nam as well as Afghanistan. Indeed, it was in 1969, at the height of the Viet Nam war, that the NDP first passed the resolution about Canadian withdrawal from NATO that the Minister, in other more partisan contexts, loves to refer to.

I also find the Minister's use of the notion of common security to be disturbing because common security is a concept developed by the Palme Commission which is to be seen as different from and opposed to the notion of collective security which is what NATO is and what the Warsaw Pact is. The notion of common security is a